

Message

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Subject: news

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Owner of proposed plant reassures residents

Associated Press

EVANSVILLE – A proposed \$2.5 billion coal-to-diesel plant in southern Indiana would have minimal pollution emissions, according to the company's president.

Riverview Energy Corporation's project would use a process called direct coal hydrogenation to turn coal into ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel, the Evansville Courier & Press reported. The facility would be located on a 550-acre site annexed by the town of Dale last year.

Area residents have expressed concerns about the project's potential health impacts.

Heat and pressure would liquefy pulverized coal, and hydrogen would be added to create the fuel, said Greg Merle, the company's president. About 1.6 million tons of coal would be used annually to produce an estimated 4.8 million barrels of diesel fuel and 2.5 million barrels of naphtha, which is used to make plastics and gasoline. Merle said sulfur taken out during the process would also be marketable.

The site won't store any waste because everything the process produces can be sold, said Merle said. He also said the process would produce minimal emissions. The process will produce less than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's sulfur content mandate of 15 parts per million, according to Merle.

John Blair is president of the Evansville-based environmental organization Valley Watch. He said the project is skipping development steps that would demonstrate how the process works and allow for fixes to potential issues.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management is reviewing the corporation's application for an air pollution permit for the project. The facility would have annual emissions rates of about 2.2 million tons of carbon dioxide, 255 tons of carbon monoxide and 120 tons of sulfur dioxide, according to the application.

Merle said those figures are precautionary limits and that the plant would stay below such levels.